

Waterbeach Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Most of these stories originally appeared in the Cambridge Daily/Evening/News or the
Cambridgeshire Weekly News, its sister title.

They are supplemented by some articles published in the
Cambridge Independent Press or Cambridge Chronicle

Most were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014

The complete 'Cambridgeshire Scrapbook' of which this is a small section is published online at
bit.ly/CambsCollection

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day. If you would like them in the meantime then please get in
touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library
where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the
1960s.

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Mike Petty, Stretham

2016

1897 05 31

Waterbeach annual parade, p3

1898 08 10

Cyclists, pedestrians, lovers of the free and open road, dwellers in and around Horningsea and Waterbeach, all interested in this district, harken. There is yet hope for you that the last relic of antiquated obstruction - the obnoxious toll at Clayhithe Bridge - may be swept away. You have to pay every time you go over, and people on the other side of the river are obliged to use the station for produce of all sorts, and for every load that comes over they have to pay 4d. Many people would make use of this road from Cambridge were it free, as the road is good, and a convenient circle may be traversed round by the bridge and back this other way.

1898 08 15

Sir - Waterbeach is the great health resort for Cantabs. What place can give such fishing? What prettier lanes, abounding with orchards, all leading to the river. If our parish council could be made to realise that they are living in 1898 AD and would level the village green, and plant a few trees round it, give us a few oil lamps at small cost, Waterbeach with its fine train service and river steamers would become an attractive residential suburb - Waterbeacher

1899 07 21

That a village of the size and importance of Waterbeach should be lighted goes without saying. It is something of a disgrace that what may be called the metropolis of a parish with an assemblage value of £13,000 should be left in complete darkness after sunset on the nights when the moon deigns not to shine. The disgrace is all the greater because there was a time when it was lighted of nights. That was when it had gas of its own. But since it lost its gas it has been content to make shift in darkness

1899 08 21

'The General is coming' is the announcement that has been placarded all over Waterbeach for some weeks past. There was no need to ask who the General was, for accompanying the announcement was a portrait of the famous General Booth. Sunday was the day of the visit & it was a great day that will be remembered not only by Salvationists, but by members of other religious bodies who willingly paid a modest fee for the privilege of sitting on a hard form for an hour and a half and listening to a discourse from a man who has influenced so many thousands.

1899 09 30

A labourer of Upware was summonsed for leaving the employment of Mr J. Cornwell, a Waterbeach farmer, without notice. Defendant had worked for him for a fortnight, he having engaged him as a labourer. He entered witness's employment as a weekly servant at a wage of 12s and left without giving notice after receiving his week's wages. As he did not return to his work Cornwell made a journey to Upware so see what his reason was for not coming back. He said he should not return for anything and that witness could do as he liked in the matter. Defendant fined 1s.

1899 12 02c

It is particularly gratifying to note that the villages are giving generously towards the assistance of our soldiers' families. The public meeting held at Waterbeach reflected the utmost credit on this village and its public spirited inhabitants. Another village that has done honour to itself is Swavesey where over £40 has been contributed. The heart of the nation has been touched to pity and to effort. The needs are great but they are bound to become very much greater

1899 12 28

The nigger troupe which came into existence under such happy circumstances some two years ago at Waterbeach made another public appearance there when they gave a successful entertainment in the

schoolroom in aid of the local War Fund. The room was crowded to the doors. Considerable pains had been taken in the arrangement of the entertainment and the programme which contained no less than 20 numbers was furnished and received with evident satisfaction

1900 01 03

Few villages display so much religious activity as that which has characterised Waterbeach. Not very long ago the Baptists entered upon a scheme for beautifying their chapel. Encouraged by their success they have now undertaken the erection of new Sunday Schools. The number of children who, Sunday after Sunday, are brought under the influence of the loyal band of workers at the chapel exceeds 150. The site has been acquired from the trustees of the Duke of Wellington

1900 02 19

A fire occurred in the shop used as a general stores for the grocery and drapery business of Mr R.A. Waddelow of Waterbeach. An assistant, Mr Albert Denson slept upon the premises and was awakened by a choking sensation. Fortunately there was a pump and a supply of pails handy and two young men, one with no shoes on and the other in his socks, commenced pouring water through the window on to the burning material underneath. For a quarter of an hour they laboured with a will before assistance was forthcoming. There is no organised fire brigade in the village, but there is a fire engine which was out of order at the time of the outbreak.

1900 06 05

Waterbeach Baptist Sunday Schoolp2

1900 07 05

Waterbeach inquest, p3

1900 07 16

A party of four men were engaged in carting hay from a field situate in Bannald's Drove, Waterbeach when a heavy storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning compelled them to seek shelter. The employer and two labourers crept under the cart. One man remained on the cart holding his pitch fork in an elevated position and the lightning must have been attracted to it. The fork acted as a conductor to his body, through which the electric fluid passed, finally losing itself in the earth where the three men were crouching. One was killed and the others badly injured.

Waterbeach Jolly Waterman drowning, p3

1900 09 1

Messrs Bailey & Tebbutt of the Panton Brewery, Cambridge, have their annual support to the harvest employees of Waterbeach who are customers of the firm. The whole function was a great success. Those who contributed to the musical programme included Mr P. Levitt of Waterbeach who was several times encored. Mr W. Flack on behalf of the working men thanked the firm for the way they looked after them. Mr Joseph Toller responding to the toast of 'The trade of Waterbeach' said that the village was fairly prosperous.

1900 10 31

Waterbeach Sunday Schools, p2

1901 08 26

A large number of the Waterbeach Salvationists congregated at the funeral of Mrs Thomas Shipp jun., of Rosemary Street, who was formerly an active 'Lieutenant' of the Corps. Mr Ellis Merry and other strong Salvationists from Cambridge were in the procession. The service was conducted by the esteemed 'Captain' Miss Westlake of the Sturton Town Army Barracks; there were nearly 500 persons present.

1901 12 20

The interior of the Wesleyan Chapel at Waterbeach has been considerably improved; the pulpit, which formerly was of an inconvenient height, has been lowered to a position more consistent with the comfort of the congregation occupying the floor pews. In front of it the dais for the accommodation of the choir has been enlarged and provided with new chairs. The scheme also included the provision of a new organ, and an American instrument now occupies a place in the chapel.

1902 05 16

Sir – now everyone is thinking how best to celebrate the Coronation I suggest that this is a suitable time to free from toll the bridge at Clayhithe. If that were to be thrown open it would be a great boon to hundreds of people both at Cambridge and Waterbeach. The Cam Sailing Club have their headquarters there and cyclists should move to free the bridge, as one of the prettiest rides around here is through Horningsea, Clayhithe, Waterbeach and Milton – R.P.B.

1902 08 18

Waterbeach coronation, p2

1903 03 17

There are several places of worship at Waterbeach but the one that most strikes the imagination of the outsider is the Baptist Church in which the Rev Charles Spurgeon ministered, and from which, even at the present time, the glamour of his personality has not departed. The members celebrated the centenary of the foundation of the church building which preceded the present one. It had a thatched roof and a brick floor and was burned down about 1862.

1903 06 27

June 20th seems to have been rather a 'high day' with a certain section of the inhabitants of Waterbeach. P.C. Greygoose said he saw a chimneysweep and three lads walking up and down the street rattling tin cans and kettles and making all the noise they could. He asked him to desist but the man replied 'That's all right, old mate, we are only going to give them a tune or two' and continued playing an instrument something like a tea tray which he hit with a bit of a stick. There was a crowd of about 200 persons round. The chimneysweep, who was deaf, stated he did not hear the constable tell him to go away. He was the boss of the band and was fined 5s.

1903 07 21

Since the outbreak of smallpox in Cambridge was officially announced there has been a large increase in the number of cases reported. Unfortunately the infection has spread to surrounding villages and a case has broken out at Histon. This has resulted in the abandonment of the Histon Show and Sports, the Waterbeach Show has been postponed, the Promenade Concert on Christ's Pieces cancelled, schools have been closed and the Barnwell Theatre Mission have suspended operations. Wherever crowds assemble in a town where smallpox is prevalent there is danger of infection

1903 08 25

Waterbeach Baptist church, p4

1903 09 04

Waterbeach rough band, p4

1903 11 09

Waterbeach railway accident, p4

1904 05 17

A Waterbeach man was summoned for riding a motor bicycle in Downing Street, Cambridge, with the mark obscured. P.c. Rowlingson said he saw the number CE 110 on the front but could not see one on the back. Defendant said the number was on when he left and was there later. But it was close up to the saddle and had perhaps been obscured by his coat. The police were right to bring the case; the

number was there but could not be seen. However there was no intention to obscure it and the defendant was convicted and discharged.

1904 07 14

The Waterbeach Passive Resistance sale was entirely devoid of the buffoonery that characterised similar events in Cambridge. It was the outcome of the refusal of Mr Mark Wyatt and his sons, of Chittering, to pay the Education rate. The amount of the distraint was £4 for which two coombs of corn was seized. This was conveyed to the village green and sold by auction to the highest bidder. The proceedings attracted a good many villagers and the singing of the hymn 'Oh God our help in ages past' preceded the sale. Mr Wyatt was a quiet, peaceable, law abiding and god-fearing man. He had been taken into a police court, charged with violating the law, his goods had been seized by force and sold publicly in order that the outraged majesty of the law should be satisfied

1904 08 06

The current issue of the 'Strand Magazine' possesses a special interest for Cambridge people since the town has furnished Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with material for his latest Sherlock Holmes story, The Missing Three-quarter. It concerns the disappearance of a member of the Cambridge University rugby team on the eve of the annual match against Oxford. Holmes is supposed to visit Cambridge, residing in an inn next to a bicycle shop; he explores Histon, Oakington and Waterbeach before the final scene of the story is set in a lonely cottage in a field near Trumpington.

1904 08 27

Waterbeach fire engine, p3

1904 10 08

Master Wee Willie M. the Waterbeach schoolboy, is a precocious child with a liking for cigarettes. He purloined a silver watch, sold it and devoted the proceeds to the purchase of his favourite brand. In the natural order of events he appeared before the magistrates who remanded to an industrial school. The prospect an exchange of the freedom of Waterbeach for the confinement of one of these dreadful schools was not at all to his liking, so when he was packed off in a carrier's cart Willie made up his mind to escape at Milton and has disappeared

1905 03 22

The story of a feud between two Waterbeach farmers was unfolded in the County Court. On Christmas Eve William Morton got out of a train at the station and went to the Lion Inn where his horse was put up. He remained until closing time and then rode home but somebody followed behind his cart; he used strong language and asked what he meant by hunting him home. They came to blows and he knocked two of his opponent's teeth out. He was known as 'The King of the Fens' until he was knocked over. 05 03 22 a & b

1905 03 23

Waterbeach farmer feud, p4 *

1905 04 19

Waterbeach passive resisters – 05 04 19

1906 03 10

The Red Cow, Landbeach, sold half a barrel and six dozen bottles of beer a week. A share-out club with 65 members met there fortnightly. Within 760 paces there were 47 private houses and four licensed pubs. The British Queen, with better accommodation, was nearby. The population of the village was 413 and allowing for 78 school children, there was a licensed house to every 67 adults. There were cottages at the back which provided facilities for secret drinking, especially as the house stood back 15 yards from the road. But the landlord was a teetotalter who did not encourage this. Also: Carrier's Cart Shelford, Haunch of Mutton & Plough & Horses Waterbeach, Rose & Crown Willingham, Hare & Hounds Over, Dolphin Stapleford, 06 03 10c & d 1906 05 26

1906 05 26

Cambridge General Benefit Society has taken over the Orwell Society which has a membership of 83. A branch has been revived at Waterbeach but the one at Duxford has been without a local manager for some time. They now admit juveniles and women almost on the same terms as men. A history of the society has been written by the Rev J.W.E. Conybeare which shows it is one of the oldest and soundest in the country. 06 05 26a & b 1906 06 30

1906 06 30

Fourteen public houses have been closed under the Licensing Act of 1904. They include a beer house at Heath Road Litlington, which sold one barrel a week, including stout, and a gallon of ginger wine. All their beer was made from pure malt and hops and it was a better house than the two nearest to it. There were four fully-licensed houses, four beer houses and one off-licence in the village. The Dolphin at Stapleford had been shut up for six weeks as the former landlord had run away and the village appeared to do well without it. The present tenant was a cycle agent and taxidermist as well, 'So you stuff people first and put them on wheels afterwards?' also Cambridge: Jolly Butchers, Star, Sun; Bassingbourn: Crown; Bottisham: Plough; Comberton: Plough; Fordham: Six Bells, Landbeach: Red Cow; Lt Shelford: Carrier's Cart; Stapleford: Dolphin; Steeple Morden: beer house; Waterbeach: Haunch of Mutton, Plough and Horses; Willingham: William IV, Rose and Crown 06 06 30d,e, f

1906 10 10

Fire broke out in the engine house of Charles Piggott, corn merchant of Landbeach. The engine had just been filled from a huge tank containing 200 gallons of oil, some of which spilled on the floor and became ignited. Flames at once rose in a great volume to the roof. Waterbeach fire brigade arrived with their manual pump and obtained a good supply of water from a trough which was filled by steam, and a hand pump, but the building was gutted. 06 10 10a

1906 11 09

Waterbeach School and James Toller – 06 11 09a

1906 11 16

The Compensation Authority considered claims for premises closed under the Licensing Act. They included a beerhouse at North Brook End, Steeple Morden, The Plough at Comberton, the Red Cow, Landbeach and Carrier's Cart at Lt Shelford. Potton Brewery said they would lose £275 if the licence of a beerhouse at Heath Road, Litlington was taken away but accepted £240 as compensation. However Benskin's Watford Brewery refused £251 for the Sun in Newmarket Road, Cambridge. also Stapleford Dolphin, Waterbeach Haunch of Mutton & Plough & Horses, Sawston – Flower Pot, Willingham – King William IV, Bottisham Plough, Soham Queen's Arms and Old Brewery 06 11 16a & b

1906 11 23

Sir - The Parish Medical Officer claimed that the subsoil under Waterbeach School was saturated with liquid sewage and ordered the children to stay away. But no-one seemed alarmed and most continued to attend. Managers took up the floorboards and dug down for the 40-year-old cesspool. Samples of soil were sent to be chemically analysed, all without result: there is not the slightest evidence for his statements. Yet this is the man to whose diagnosis we entrust our poor aged sick folk – Correspondent 06 11 23

1906 11 30

Waterbeach School for infants – 06 11 30a

1908 03 09

The Long Reach public house stands on the river bank a quarter of a mile from Old Chesterton. The landlord paid no rent and was allowed five shillings a week to keep the house open. The trade was about 21 barrels of beer and 12 gallons of spirit a year. It should be closed together with the Jolly

Waterman in Waterbeach Fen. It had no road leading to it and the nearby Jolly Anglers was more convenient and had a ferry attached. 08 03 09

1908 07 31

Twenty-six licensed houses are to close, magistrates decided. They include the Robin Hood at Litlington, Chesterton Long Reach, Swaffham Prior's Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Three Jolly Watermen in Waterbeach Fen. But the Fox in the Wood at Soham and the Cock at Isleham were spared after Police Superintendent Winter failed to appear to give evidence. The licence of the Black Horse at Over was renewed after the Star Brewery appealed. also Barrington Boot & Shoe, Bassingbourn Yew Tree, Steeple Morden Lion, Swaffham Prior John Bull, Bottisham Rose & Crown, Cottenham Six Bells, Oakington Lion and Lamb, Stapleford Hammer & Anvil, Swavesey Chequers, Willingham Little Rose, Castle Camps George, Balsham Ram, Linton White Hart, Cambridge Yorkshire Grey, Old Red Lion, Nine Pines, Thatched House, Baker's Arms, Red Lion, Brewery Tap & Carpenters' Arms. CWN 08 07 31

1908 10 02

Following a coroner's inquest two hundred residents of the Waterbeach signed a petition claiming their doctor was not a fit and proper person to be the Medical Officer for the Relief District. At least 20 are paying for medical attendance into another local practitioner's club rather than avail themselves of his advice. CWN 08 10 02

1908 12 11

Chesterton Guardians - Waterbeach district medical officer resigns following complaints – 08 12 11

1909 01 15

The dread reaper has been unusually busy with his sickle lately in Cambridge, though most of the grain he has gathered was white unto the harvest. Mrs Toller, whose death took place at Waterbeach, was 80 years of age, Mr Arthur Rutter was 92, Mr Spilsworth 79 and Joseph Reynolds was 81. Other deaths were recorded this week at the age of 73, 75, 81 and 82. Truly Cambridgeshire would seem to be a healthy county 09 01 15

1909 04 09

The river Cam is so badly silted that sailing races are seriously impeded. Now the section from Bottisham Locks to Waterbeach Lode will be dredged by the South Level Commissioners and the bit from Clayhithe to Jesus Green by the Conservators of the Cam with funding from the Town Council and University Boat Club. This is of satisfaction to all sailing and rowing men especially F. H. Sanderson, president of the Cam Sailing Club, who regards the river as one of the most valuable assets Cambridge possesses. 09 04 09

1910 04 08

Mark Wyatt of Waterbeach passive resister 10 04 08e

1911 03 17

Public house licences: Willingham 'Rose & Crown' *& 'Black Lion', Swavesey 'Little Watch' & 'Black Horse', Dry Drayton 'Prince of Wales', Waterbeach 'Wheatsheaf', Impington 'Chequers', Cottenham 'Turks Head' – 11 03 17c & d

1911 04 07

Upware Ferry. At a meeting of County School Attendance Committee a letter was received from Mr Benjamin Read stating that he had obtained a new boat for ferrying the children across the river at Upware and asking that the payment to him might be increased from £6 to £8 per annum. Sevenths of the cost will be charged to the parish of Waterbeach 11 04 07

1911 07 07

Carlton's Coronation celebrations began with a service in the church after which the school children and many parents adjourned to the schoolroom for the unveiling of the portraits of the King and Queen presented by the County Council. Coronation mugs or plates were presented before all sat down to an excellent tea in Mr Nice's barn. During the evening a good programme of sports was carried out and the proceedings concluded with the singing of the National Anthem 11 07 07b also Waterbeach

1911 08 11

A serious fire broke out at Bank Farm, Waterbeach Fen when during the threshing operation the drum 'ran hot' and fired the rye passing through the machine. The exceptional dryness of the woodwork and crops made the fire spread with great rapidity and the threshing drum and elevator were destroyed, the engine narrowly escaping. Three or four haystacks were set alight and farm buildings soon caught fire. Men were able to save the house and a workman's cottage, although the blazing buildings ran right up to the walls of the house. But eleven pigs and 50 hens were burnt to death and about a ton of coal was consumed by the flames 11 08 11c

1912 02 23

Collision between cycle and 'sociable' at Waterbeach – 12 02 23g

191 07 12

Waterbeach women's suffrage meeting – 12 07 12m

1913 03 24

A fierce fire occurred at North Fen Farm, Waterbeach, deep in the fen. The alarm was given by members of the Stretham Fen platelayers' gang who carried bucket after bucket of water from the wide drains. The battle seemed hopeless. The tar on the nearest side of the shed was melted and streamed down the sides. It was burnt out with its contents, including a self-binder, grass mower, horse hoe and three bags of artificial manure. Waterbeach fire brigade got within a mile of the scene but were told the fire had been extinguished and turned back. 13 03 24 p5 CIP

1913 04 25

Waterbeach death Henry Brooks, local correspondent of CIP

1913 05 30

Waterbeach Friendly Societies parade – Feast

1913 05 11

James Toller said Waterbeach Baptists had bought a thatched dove house and converted it into a chapel with high-backed pews so worshippers could sleep in them if they wished. A woman living nearby turned out a few cinders, the roof caught fire and it burned down. Some believed in the old place and worshipped the very smoke when it was burning. C.H. Spurgeon, the pastor was asked what was to be done. "Build another one" was his answer and a new place was built for £800. It became packed and began to fall apart so it was restored in 1894 13 05 11 p9 CIP

1913 07 18

Sunday closing of public houses – Waterbeach Baptist

1913 08 01

Waterbeach land sale

1913 08 15

Waterbeach baby burnt to death

1914 05 29

Waterbeach feast – 14 05 29g, h

1914 07 10

Waterbeach disturbance – Gotobed

1914 08 14

Red Cross hospitals have been equipped throughout the county. At Cottenham 40 beds are ready at one hour's notice, 25 are ready for wounded at Histon Council School, Oakington has 15. At Waterbeach the Baptist Sunday Schoolroom is equipped as a hospital with nurses in uniform presenting a neat appearance. At Newmarket thirty beds are fitted in the King Edward VII Memorial Hall. Should 100 wounded men be sent further beds will be fitted in the Astley Institute, Town Hall and Technical Institute. 14 08 14 p8

1914 09 11

Lieut R MacLeod of Cambridge, who was wounded during the fighting at Mons, gave an interesting account of his 'holiday' at a recruiting meeting in Waterbeach. The Germans outnumbered us by five to one. They came on in masses and we mowed them down. But still they kept coming. They burned our transport so we got no breakfast but locals gave us eggs and fruit. We hung on to the position as long as we could but they got up to the right and left and enfiladed us from both flanks. We managed to save all our guns, though lots of teams were shot down. I was wounded in trying to get a team, he said. The cavalry did very fine work as did the aeroplanes

1914 10 30

Belgians – Waterbeach not help, Soham arrivals, Burwell, Bourn, Cottenham, Duxford, Gamlingay, Gt Eversden, Histon, Linton, Over, Sawston, Swavesey, Chatteris, Cheveley

1914 11 06

Long Career of Public Service. The death of Mr. James Toller, (83) of Winfield, Waterbeach, occurred at his residence on Friday after a short illness. He had been indisposed for about three weeks, but it was not until about a week ago that he was compelled to keep to his bed. Mr. Toller was well known in Cambridgeshire, and for 45 years was a familiar figure in Waterbeach. For practically the whole of his life he was in business as a farmer and corn merchant, and he also performed numerous public duties to the satisfaction of the district and to his own credit during a long period. He was one of the original members of the County Council, and by his death the County loses its only link with the first Cambridgeshire Council. He was also a member of the Chesterton Board of Guardians for considerably over 20 years. In the village he took an active part in local affairs. He was an original member of the Parish Council. Mr. Toller endeavoured to secure a seat in Parliament immediately after the introduction of the Home Rule Bill by Mr. Gladstone. He fought the Mid-Norfolk constituency in the Liberal interest and succeeded in considerably reducing his opponent's majority. In later years Mr. Toller was associated with the local Conservative and Unionist cause. For about 50 years he has been senior deacon of the Baptist Church, and was a generous supporter. He was a close friend of C. H. Spurgeon, who had often stayed at Mr Toller's residence in Waterbeach. Mr. Toller's wife pre-deceased him, and two sons and two daughters are left.

1914 11 13

Belgian refugees – Carlton, Waterbeach, Bassingbourn, Sawston, Willingham, Horningsea, Elsworth, Fowlmere, Ickleton, Cheveley

1915 08 20

Lady French leaves Tipperary rooms; King visits EGH; war-time degrees, Senate House; Lady Jellicoe's visit; departure 1st Battalion, station; Red Cross auction sale; V.T.C. men on route march; St David's day scene; Cambs recruiting party leaving Cambridge; German helmet trophy; wounded soldiers at Waterbeach; Histon Red Cross Hospital ward 15 08 20a

1918 04 24

A great flood.—The Cambridge district was visited last week by a flood which reached a higher level than has been recorded since the historical inundation which followed the great storm of August 3, 1879 (says the writer of Town and Country Topics). Miles of country were under water on Wednesday; roads and paths were rendered impassable to foot passengers, the ferries at Cambridge were stopped, low-lying houses and premises near the river were flooded and the water was up to the permanent way of the railway between Chesterton and Waterbeach. Fortunately the flood water was got away quickly downstream, but its rise showed what a considerable quantity of water must have fallen in the first three days of last week, and also how important it is that there should be no obstruction at Denver. The river has shown more frequent tendencies to flood of late years than, formerly - one cause is said to be the clearing-out of ditches and water courses by War Agricultural Committees

1919 02 26

Serious Floods.—Not for many years has the County of Cambridge been visited by floods of such magnitude or of so serious a nature as those experienced within the last ten days. Thousands of acres are under water, and at Cambridge the water rose at one time to within six inches of the height reached by the memorable flood of 1879. At Ely the river touched a depth beyond any previously attained within the memory of the oldest inhabitants. It is good news to hear that since Sunday the water has been steadily falling. A serious break in the river bank midway between Waterbeach and Upware last Wednesday resulted in the disastrous flooding of hundreds of acres of low-lying land in the vicinity, the temporary isolation of several farms and cottages and considerable damage to stacks. On Tuesday night ... above the banks at Waterbeach Fen where the break in the river bank occurred, and farmers took prompt steps to remove their stock to safety, but on Wednesday morning a break occurred, and the breach rapidly becoming wider, the water poured through. Farm buildings and cottages were surrounded, and the inhabitants in some cases were forced to seek shelter in the village. All Wednesday farm workers and other helpers from Waterbeach and district worked up to their knees in water, but the gap widened, and it was found necessary to sink two barges in the breach. Thousands of sandbags were requisitioned and by this means the hole was filled and the inflow of water at this spot checked. Men have been employed night and day in "cradging" along the banks and strengthening the places where any water was found overflowing, this also being done on the Stretham bank of the Old West. Dredging scheme needed; photos – 19 02 26a & b

1919 03 12

5,000 Acres Under Water. — In consequence of three serious breaks in the banks caused by the recent floods, it is estimated that about 5,000 acres of farm land, including some smallholdings, are still under water to a depth of from 2 ft. to 5 ft. in Cambridgeshire. In places the water stretches as far as the eye can see, cottages, farm buildings, stacks and just the top rails of gates showing out of the water. The breaks which occurred in the banks holding back the water resulted in large areas, hitherto regarded as safe from the inroads of flood water, becoming inundated. The damage has been most extensive and in some cases tons of produce, particularly potato crops, have been rendered almost valueless. The places where the banks gave way were (1) at Barway, on the Soham Lode, (2) at Waterbeach Fen, on the river Cant, (3) at Stretham and Thetford Fen, on the Old West River. The worst break was probably at Barway, where the bank apparently gave way from underneath, after being undermined by the water. Huge portions of the bank were torn away by the rush of water and can be seen now dotted about in the floods like little islands. 1919 04 30
Waterbeach entertains demobbed men – photo feature – 19 04 30b

1919 09 24

Rural housing – suggested garden city at Waterbeach – 19 09 24a

1919 10 22

Rural housing, proposed garden city at Waterbeach for 50 houses – 19 10 22a

1920 01 07

Rats Killed, Up to December 3rd last the number of rats killed in the county and paid for by Cambs County Council under the Rats Order, was 35,516. The districts concerned were: Little Abington (number of rats killed 504), Ashley (980), Balsham (2,718), Borough Green (358), Bottisham (999), Cheveley (631). Chippenham (838), Great Chishill (322), Croxton (225), Dullingham (1,205), Duxford (754), Elsworth (39), Fordham (8,072), Fowlmere (489), Harston (322), Hauxton (186). Heydon (1,593), Hildersham (236). Horseheath (324), Ickleton (1,095), Isleham (3,809), Kennett (1,422). Kirtling (396), Kneesworth (549), Linton (584), Lode (548), Melbourn (442), Newton (160), Pampisford (429), Sawston (332), Shepreth (313). Shudy Camps (1.38), Snailwell (786), Soham (2,896), Stetchworth (1,105) Swaffham Prior (1,032), Thriplow (464), Waterbeach (967), West Wickham (995), Whittlesford (324), Great Wilbraham (846), Wood Ditton (2,017).

1920 11 17

Histon & Waterbeach memorials unveiled – 20 11 17a

1920 11 15

War memorials unveiled on Armistice Sunday – St Giles, Histon & Impington, St Ives, Waterbeach #

1924 04 06c

Mr T Garrett told Landbeach and Waterbeach Labour Party that the new Labour government had received a good press to begin with but the difficult times were now coming upon them. When something to do with mining came up in parliament there were always half a hundred miners to put the case of the men. But it was quite otherwise with agriculture. They wanted an agricultural wing 50 strong for the Labour Party. They must never lose sight of their object which was to push up the wages of the agricultural labourer and secure a fair return to the smallholder for his hard toil

1924 11 18c

Compensation was approved in respect of six licensed houses, which have been closed. They were The King's head, Cottenham, The Dolphin, Waterbeach, The Little Rose at Swavesey, The Coach and Horse, Linton, The Morning Star at Sawston & The Duke of Wellington in Cambridge, licensee Mr A.S. Scales where compensation was agreed at £1,000.

1924 12 23c

Claimed to be the biggest club of its kind in the county, the Waterbeach Parochial Share-Out, Sick Benefit and Insurance Society divided up £1,330 among its 564 members. Preceding the share-out, 170 sat down to tea, and the proceedings were rounded off by a concert. The society owes its origin to a desire to dissociate share-out clubs from the public houses. It was founded in 1917 largely by the efforts of the clergy and has been attended with such gratifying results that members are hoping to see similar societies spring up in other locations

1925 03 09

William Asplin applied for the renewal of the licence of the Sun, Waterbeach, owned by the Star Brewery. The house was used by travellers for lodging accommodation, also by grooms travelling with stud horses. There were three clubs which met on the premises, the Foresters, Shepherds, and a share-out club. They catered for two 'horkey' dinners a year. The tenant also carried on the business of carrier and grew fruit and vegetables for sale. It was 70 paces from the White Horse, which was a fully-licensed house, did a better trade, and had better accommodation.

1927 07 07

Eight people were rendered homeless as a result of a fire which involved two old-fashioned cottages in High Street Waterbeach. They were built of brick and plaster with a galvanised iron roof over thatch. In one, containing five rooms, a pantry and a wash house lived Mr & Mrs Cudworth and their five children, while the adjoining cottage, occupied by Mrs Hole, consisted of four rooms. The Waterbeach Fire Brigade was soon on the scene but the supply of water from neighbouring pumps

soon proved inadequate. Meanwhile a band of willing helpers assisted in removing furniture & some money which Mrs Hole kept upstairs.

1928 02 22

A porter's sensation dash in front of an express train, travelling at nearly 60 mph, and a thrilling rescue, was witnessed by amazed onlookers at Waterbeach station. The express from Ely was thundering into the station when the signalman saw a man standing in the level crossing gateway. The wicket gate can be locked by a lever in the signal box but he dared not lock it with the man standing where he was, as the result would be to crush him badly. The man, who was deaf and has poor sight, then began to make a crossing. The oncoming train was less than 20 paces off when Goods Porter Ernest Curtis rushed across the line and held him between the two sets of metals while the express dashed by. The situation was so serious that onlookers thought both men had been killed.

1928 07 18

An important scheme for the making of a new road from Cottenham to Wilburton and the erection of a bridge over the Old West River near Twentypence Ferry will come before the County Council at their next meeting. They considered a petition from inhabitants in Horningsea and Waterbeach that the council should take over Clayhithe Bridge and abolish the tolls but are unable to recommend the purchase of the bridge at present. It was only 11 ft 6 inches wide and could not be widened without being rebuilt; it would only carry a vehicle of an axle load of eight tons and the approach roads were difficult.

1928 11 17

The great gale which swept the country blew down trees, damaged roofs and caused damage. The most serious loss is the removal of the roof of the grandstand on the Cambridge Town Football Club's ground. The cross at St Barnabas church was carried away but no person was injured in its fall. Hoardings on the LNER Railway's property near Cambridge station have been razed to the ground and the line was blocked by a signal that was blown down near Waterbeach. At Trinity College the famous 'Sedgwick Elm' in the Fellows' Garden was partly blown down. At Ely two large sheets of lead were lifted on the roof of the cathedral nave and a huge chicken shed in Lynn Road was completely demolished.

1929 04 10

Death of 'Dad' Pointer, Waterbeach Salvation Army – CDN 10.4.29

1930 08 14

The Star Inn, Waterbeach had sold no beer or spirits since last May and the licence was in jeopardy, a judge was told. The trade had run down and Pampisford Breweries had refused delivery unless they were paid £65 for the beer. They had another tenant ready to take over. The landlord said he had tried everything he knew to make the house 'go' – got up dances, a shove ha'penny league and so on. There was not a gallon of beer in the place. 30 08 14a

1930 08 20

The Beds, Cambs and Hunts Electricity Company sought permission to erect a power line across the Waterbeach Lodge estate. They wanted to supply the village with electricity and had secured way-leave for the whole route apart from this one pole. But the owner, T.C. Lethbridge said the overhead wires would cross a paddock and he would be unable to let it. He wanted an underground cable laid instead. 30 08 20c

1931 01 10

An Ortona conductor was summoned for allowing 60 passengers on to a single-decker bus licensed to carry 37. It was a very busy day just before Christmas. The bus had started from Sutton and the trouble arose at Denny End, Waterbeach where there were a number of passengers wanting to go to Cambridge market. The bus had to pull up at the railway station to set down passengers and people

waiting there wanted to get on. The conductor did his best to prevent them but was helpless. He tried to get them to transfer to a relief bus but they would not get off. 31 01 10b

1931 07 17

In spite of the rain the Peckover Van and Wise Spending Exhibition attracted a large crowd to Waterbeach village green. The exhibits included some anatomical specimens showing the injury which alcohol drinking could cause. The children were also attracted by a grass snake, caught on the Histon Road, and preserved in alcohol. Twenty-four children signed the Torchbearer's pledge. 31 07 17a

1933 06 15

John Mellanby electrical contractor, Waterbeach – 33 06 15e

1938 07 01

A large number of Methodists gathered to celebrate the anniversary of the Swaffham Fen Methodist Church. This is one of the outposts of Methodism, being situated about four miles beyond Waterbeach and three from Swaffham Prior. It is only reached with difficulty after travelling down lonely fen roads and crossing the river in an antiquated chain boat. It has been well served over a long period by the stalwart local preachers of the Cottenham circuit. Afterwards a picnic tea was held in the grass roadway near the chapel 36 07 01

1937 09 15

The ceremony of the enclosure of the new Carmelite Convent at Waterbeach was performed by the Bishop of Northampton in the shade of a huge plane tree. The Gregorian Chant was led by the priests while Catholic hymns were sung by the laity, numbering over a 1,000. The old convent in Chesterton Road, opened 12 years ago, has proved inadequate so a house standing in extensive grounds has been chosen. Visitors have been seeing over the building at the rate of 100 a day. But never again, except in extremest necessity, will anybody other than nuns enter the door. 37 09 15 & a

1938 07 06

Burwell lads had been drinking at Waterbeach and arrived at Upware ferry about 11pm. There was a ferry staging and they pushed it adrift. It weighed half-a-ton and was dangerous when floating submerged. A notice board was also pulled off and they turned their attention to the South Level tollhouse. Windows were smashed with a hoe and the bedroom covered with glass. One lad said they went to the house for shelter as it was raining, but could not get in and spent the night in a barn. He wanted to swim the river for the boat, but the others would not let him. They were fined. 38 07 06

1938 10 21

Waterbeach fire, thatched barn at The Gables – 38 10 21a

1939 01 30

Flood levels in the fens remain high. At Waterbeach the Town Crier made a call for volunteers and rallied forty men to work on the banks of the Bottisham Lode. At Littleport station sleepers are covered and only the tops of the lines are showing. Goods trucks are standing with water beneath them. In the Holmes inhabitants have left before their houses were surrounded. At Swavesey Mow Fen and Middle Fen railway gatehouses have had to be evacuated. 39 01 30a

1939 07 24

The Air Ministry's proposal to purchase land at Winfold Farm, Waterbeach, thereby displacing 20 tenants, seven of whom lived on the farm with their families, was criticised by councillors. The land had been brought to a high state of cultivation by tenants since they took their holdings as ex-servicemen in 1920. They would have the utmost difficulty finding a farm as good. The Ministry were dealing with the defences of this country but there must be other land they could use. 39 06 24

1939 07 19

Two mobile first aid posts are to be provided, one stationed at Waterbeach and the other at Gt Shelford to deal with air raid casualties and second-hand vehicles will be purchased for adaptation as ambulances. 39 07 19

1939 07 24

Waterbeach aerodrome site of smallholdings, 20 tenants, two had lost legs in war – 39 07 24 & a 1940 03 12

Waterbeach and Oakington manual fire engines in yard to be broken up – photo – 40 03 12

1940 04 19

Eeling at Bottisham Locks. — In a recent issue (March 22), writes Watchman, reference was made to a possible revival of a once important Fenland industry, namely eel fishing. A correspondent, who, about 70 years ago was born and reared within a mile of Bottisham Locks, once a famous place on the Cam for eels, is reminded of some interesting happenings and of an eel pie business there. About a century ago, the keeper of the locks was old William Robinson, who lived in a little cottage opposite the sluice gates with his wife and daughter. And he was one of the most famous, eelers of his time, working not only on the Cam, but also along the lode that runs from Bottisham to the locks on the main stream. He rarely used an eel fork or spear for catching eels, preferring the "eel-set" (snare) or eel-buck (trap), a kind of wicker tunnel closed at one end. The old lock keeper caught more eels than he could comfortably dispose of alive, and this led to the making of two penny eel pies by his wife and daughter. On certain evenings the old fellow would go into Waterbeach village and at the Sun, Rose and Crown, Dog and Duck, Travellers' Rest, and other taverns marketed his wares. The fame of Robinson's eel pies, reached Cambridge, but before a branch business or "round" could be established in the town, the famous old eel catcher died and the business came to an end. According to my correspondent, who often discussed the eel trade with other eelers at the locks, the female eel is "very tasty, very sweet" and far better than the male of the species, the male being smaller and tougher than the female. CIPof 19 Apr 1940

1940 07 27

Waterbeach vicar rang church bells – he'd forgot they banned – 40 07 27a

1940 07 29

One bullet—four hurt. — Four men were injured when a rifle went off accidentally in the bar of the Sun Inn, Waterbeach, on Sunday. The bullet first hit the floor, and then ricocheted, striking George Edward Cudworth, and John Wm. Utteridge. Fragments from the floor wounded Albert Murfitt and Arthur Gifford. All four men come from Waterbeach and all sustained injuries to the legs. They were taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital in the police ambulance. The rifle was being demonstrated by a soldier, who had been asked if he would do so by an old Army man. This man was unhurt. – 40 07 29b

1941 11 14

"Freeing the Traction Engine".— According to a Waterbeach-born correspondent (says Watchman) today is the 45th anniversary of the repeal of what people were pleased to call the old Red Flag Act. It was on November 14 1896, that traction engines, then largely used for agricultural work, were first allowed on the public roads without a man walking some yards in front and carrying a red flag to warn people of the coming of mechanical transport. Steam engines, used for driving roundabouts and for drawing showmen's vans, were in the same category as traction engines used by farmers, and the man with a red flag was a familiar figure on country roads. It was about eighty years ago that the first steam roundabout appeared at one of the Cambridge fairs, and it is said to have been invented by an engineer James Savage, who lived at King's Lynn.

1941 11 28

The "Old Clay Doot."—A Fenland correspondent (says Watchman) writes: "Clay doot and jill are old Fenland words, but I cannot at the moment trace their origin. My great grandfather (born 1800. died 1897), who was a boy at the time of Waterloo, and remembered the news of the battle coming to

Waterbeach, often said he would "now have a cuff or two at my old clay doot," and he also often told me not to 'jill about' (be fidgety)." Half-shooter, long-sleever and Fassidge, says the correspondent, are new to him

1941 12 26

Graves in Orchards, — Commenting in a London magazine upon the seemingly strange places in which the bodies of human beings have been buried, a writer makes special mention of interments in orchards, and names the Eastern Counties as being the place where once upon a time such burials were by no means unusual (writes Watchman). A Waterbeach born correspondent, in calling attention to the matter says that from the parish register of this village may be found an entry, which reads: "1679, December 10, Francis Wilson excommunicated; buried in his orchard." Villagers under sentence of excommunication (continues my correspondent) were very often not allowed any burial ceremony, and, strictly speaking, could not be interred in the village churchyard.

1942 01 16

Three preachers at Oakington. A recent note of mine (says Watchman) has brought me the following interesting letter from Mr. H. Young, 5 Rampton Road, Cottenham.—"I was interested to read your account of a burial in an orchard at Waterbeach. At Oakington three Nonconformist preachers were buried in a garden near the parish church. They were the Revs. F. Holcroft, died 1692; Joseph Oddy, died 1697 and Henry Oasland, died 1711. Can any reader remember the date of the great Commemoration Festival held in a field, belonging to a Mr. Morris, to do honour to the memory of these three Nonconformist preachers? Dr. Green of Cambridge presided; the speakers were the Revs. J. C. Wells, of Cottenham; Flanders of Swavesey; King of Gransden; Neal of Waterbeach; Parish of Cottenham; Shaw of Over; and Mr. J. Smith, of Willingham, I have in my possession a book giving an account of the day's proceedings, and it would be interesting to know how many years ago this was. More than 2,000 people are said to have been present"

1942 04 24

Late Mr E, J, Hagger.- The many friends of Mr. Edward John Hagger heard with deep regret of his sudden death, which occurred at Addenbrooke's Hospital after a brief illness, Born 64 years ago the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Hagger, he was a native of Eversden, where, until his recent removal to Little Fen Farm Waterbeach, he farmed for many years at the Church Farm, and being keenly interested in the welfare and activities of the district, he held many public offices, among them: Chairman of Caxton and Arrington R.D.C. and Board of Guardians (now defunct) and subsequently a member of the South Cambs. R.D.C., Chairman of the Parish Meeting, Churchwarden at both Great and Little Eversden, School Manager and member of the Cambs Special Constabulary. He had also been Chairman of the Cambridge branch of the .National Farmers' Union.

1942 12 11

Wounded Military Medallist. - News of a Waterbeach man well-known in Cambridge in peace time as a boxer, has been received by his parents. He is Sergeant G. H. Payne and Mr. and Mrs. Payne, of. 5 Orchard Cottages, Waterbeach, have learned that he was wounded in the Middle East at the beginning of October last while serving with the Royal Artillery, and that since then he has been awarded the Military Medal.

1944 01 14

Agricultural Cottages, — The first group of agricultural cottages to be completed in Cambridgeshire was officially opened at Waterbeach on Saturday, afternoon by the Chairman of Chesterton Rural Council, Mr. W. D. F. Davey, in the presence of other officials of the council and representatives of the builders. Built as a terrace, the four Cottages is situated in Piece's Lane. Each comprises a parlour and living room downstairs, with a kitchenette, and three bed- rooms upstairs. Electric light is installed and cooking is done on a coal range. There is also provision for hot and cold water. Another feature which will appeal particularly to the womenfolk is the generous built-in cupboard accommodation. 44 01 10

1944 04 21

"There for the asking". — At the Cambs Divisional Court on Saturday, two airmen admitted having stolen two fowls, saying they were loose on the road at Waterbeach and "just there for the asking". They were fined' £2 each, with costs of 7s. between them.

1944 05 26

Boxing.—Members of the R.A.F. supported Salute the Soldier Week (at Waterbeach) by organising a boxing tournament in the grounds of Rookery Nook on Tuesday evening. In addition to R.A.F. representatives, boxers from the U.S. and some local lads figured in the programme, and some grand contests were seen.

1944 09 01

Cambs Police Changes— The retirement on August 31 of two members of the Cambs County Police Force has meant promotions and a reshuffle. Those who retire, both after 25 years' service, are Supt. Frank Housden of Newmarket, and Sergeant C. Gilby, of Bottisham. Inspector L. A. Unwin, of Newmarket, will succeed the superintendent, having been appointed temporary superintendent. Sergeant Walter Leach, of Linton, becomes temporary inspector, while Detective Constables F. W. G. Fouracre and F. G. Brown, both at present attached to headquarters, have been appointed to the rank of temporary sergeant. P.c. Miller, of Waterbeach, will be transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department at Headquarters.

1946 06 12

Squatters take former WAAF site opposite Slap Up Waterbeach next door to German prisoners' camp – 46 06 12

1946 09 18

Lancaster crashes in field off Cambridge Road, Waterbeach – 46 09 18

1947 03 19

The bank has burst at Ten Mile Bank and on the River Wissey and water is pouring through a thirty-yard breach. A huge area of fenland is involved and livestock is being evacuated. Another breach has occurred in the bank of the Old West at Stretham and water is pouring in a torrent into Waterbeach fen. The waters of the Cam have dropped seven inches at Clayhithe but a break in the bank is feared about a mile and a half beyond towards Ely

1947 06 23

The temptation caused by a salvage dump containing equipment which was expected by two men to be "broken up and thrown away" led to their appearance at the Cambs Petty Sessions on Saturday. Defendants pleaded guilty to being concerned in stealing four petrol motors and generators to the value of £40 from the salvage dump at Waterbeach Aerodrome. One said "About a fortnight ago I was working on the dump with a civilian driver called "Spike". He asked me if I could get some engines. He said he could sell the engines and make some money and would stand me a drink sometime". Defendant said he understood from "Paddy" that the engines were to be broken up and he thought they would be thrown away

1947 07 08

Flying officer R.W. Ford was ferrying a Meteor jet-aircraft from Gloucester to West Raynham yesterday, when turbine trouble forced him to attempt a landing at Cambridge Airport. He crash-landed in a barley field about 200 yards short of the airfield. The tail unit broke off, and the aircraft turned completely round before skidding to a stop. Flying Officer Ford stepped out, uninjured except for a chip in the skin on the bridge of his nose. Within an hour he was on his way in an Anson that had been sent to fetch him. Crash-apparatus from the airport was quickly on the scene and R.A.F., Waterbeach, provided a guard.

1947 08 22

An unusually early harvest in ideal weather, particularly for combines - but one with disappointingly low yields. That, in brief, sums up the situation in Cambridgeshire where a certain amount of new corn is now on the market. Yields of wheat generally are very poor, averaging only about four sacks an acre, compared with twelve last year. The position in East Anglia generally is worse than in the rest of the country owing to the drought. Land which was lightly-flooded around Stretham, Waterbeach and Over has yielded crops, some better than the average because of the moisture which the dry land lacked

1947 09 13

While housing is still one of the most urgent problems facing the country, it is encouraging to see where progress is really being made, and such an excellent example of British workmanship as the house at Waterbeach which has been erected under the Chesterton Rural District Council's post-war programme. This house, no.28 Bannold Road, was inspected by members of the council on Thursday. Built of red brick it makes use of every available inch of space. The front door opens into a red-tiled hall, at the end of which is situated a red tiled kitchen. Mr F. Cooper (chief carpenter) said these tiles had been used because of expenditure but all other rooms had the usual wooden floors. Few housewives would find fault with this though, for besides looking very attractive, it is easier for cleaning. The front room has a plug for wireless aerial and power points, which, incidentally are in every room of the house

1947 09 22

Waterbeach R.A.F. station - a wartime home of Bomber Command and now operated by Transport Command - was on Saturday invaded by at least ten thousand people at the Air Forces "at home" on the 7th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Waterbeach is one of the permanent type of R.A.F. stations, and its main job is the transporting of troops, mail and freight from this country to Singapore. Daily giant Avro Yorks, as safe and as comfortable as human ingenuity can make them, leave for Lyneham in Wilts, where they pick up passengers. In a large hangar visitors saw an Avro York aircraft being serviced and clambered all over the plane which is capable of carrying 37 people, including crew, and which enables them to travel more comfortably than they would often do on the ground. In another hanger was a German V.1, different kinds of bombs, aircraft spares and equipment.

1948 11 17

Days of the "flying farmer" were foreshadowed at the Cambridge cattle market when a Tiger Moth dual-control aircraft was auctioned along with the more usual agricultural implements. It was bought for £100 by Mr Jack Branch, of Waterbeach, an agricultural contractor and motor dealer. The machine, once an RAF aircraft was advertised in the catalogue as "engine as new, airframe done 1,508 hours at the last inspection". It is the first time that an aircraft has been auctioned at the cattle market. Interested spectators climbed on to the lorry on which it rested to inspect it, while small boys took the opportunity of climbing into the cockpit. A civil aviation expert estimated that a similar aircraft in going order would be priced about £250.

1948 12 08

Cambridgeshire is the home base of some 50% of the RAF aircraft and crews at present bringing help on the airlift to Berlin. Oakington, one of the war-time Pathfinder airfields, and Waterbeach, are the two stations on which Dakota squadrons taking part in the lift have their home base. Another Cambridge link is that the commander of the squadron equipped with Hastings transport aircraft is a Cambridge man, Squadron-Leader P. J. Finlayson of Milton Road. He was the first man to pilot a Hastings carrying coal into Gatow, one of the Berlin termini of the lift.

1949 07 13

Yesterday was a typical hot-weather day in the life of the Cambridgeshire fire service. They had no fewer than nine calls, mostly to grass fires. They went to a fire at Church St, Willingham where a heap of manure had caught alight. At 6.19 pm a call was received from the Willows, near Barnold crossing, Waterbeach, where there is a considerable quantity of peat land. The railway embankment

there has been alight for about a month now and the fire brigade was called to prevent it from spreading to the crops. The firemen were out all night and were still there this morning

1949 09 20

Air-minded people to the number of 9,000 visited Waterbeach RAF station for the "At Home" day, part of the commemoration of the Battle of Britain. The station is the base of 24 (Commonwealth) station of transport command. Making its first appearance was a small monoplane built by F/Lt J.R. Coates, a flight engineer on the station.

1949 10 11

Sir – I note with interest remarks about cinema entertainment particularly in reference to the 16 mm Film Exhibitors Guild. The Guild is well represented in this area. Mr Maddox of Orwell, trading as County Mobile Cinemas; Wrights Ltd of Cambridge, trading as Wright Mobile Cinemas and Mr Oddy of Waterbeach, trading as Globe Cinema Service. The Chairman is Mr David of David Film Library, Wisbech, a well-known film renter and mobile exhibitor.

1950 04 01

An appeal for greater membership of the British Legion was made at the annual dinner of the Waterbeach and Landbeach branch. The branch president: "Our strength is in district and rural branches and our weakness is in the towns and cities". In country branches membership was as good as one in ten.

1950 07 06

Using pre-cast and interlocking concrete blocks three men laid the equivalent of 3,000 bricks in just under 3½ hours on the Newmarket Road housing estate, Cambridge. The blocks, patented under the name of "Dri-Crete" are the results of research by Mr B. F. Hartley, director of the British Art Tile Co. of Mill Road. During 1950 two houses have been erected at the new satellite town of Newton Aycliffe, near Darlington, using the blocks. Members of the Dri –Crete Association visited Papworth to see farm buildings erected from the blocks and to Waterbeach RAF station to inspect Dri-Crete walls.

1950 08 31

The post office proposes to introduce the 999 scheme for emergency calls as from today at exchanges in the areas of Bottisham, Comberton, Cottenham, Elsworth, Shelford, Haddenham & Waterbeach. The system enables a caller by dialling 999 instead of 0 to secure the special attention of the exchange operator for emergency calls. Special equipment has been installed at the exchange so that when 999 is dialled an emergency lamp and loud buzzer will indicate to the operator that the call is especially urgent.

1950 09 18

For many of the 7,500 spectators the 'At Home' held at RAF station Oakington, (some of whom wore handlebar moustaches and ex-service ties), probably brought back memories of wartime experiences. Spectators poured in by bus, car and bicycle and some even walked or hitch-hiked. Small boys sat in the pilot's seat of the Prime Minister's personal aircraft and imagined themselves airmen. The 'beating-up' of the aerodrome by a Meteor jet fighter from Waterbeach was probably the biggest thrill of the afternoon.

1950 10 06

Waterbeach and Upwood are amongst airfields which are "warming up" in preparation for the start of the biggest air exercise since the war. It has been designed to test the control of air defence operations. Cambridge members of the Royal Observer Corps will man the operations room in the Newmarket Road headquarters and posts throughout the countryside. Every aircraft passing over the county will be plotted, and the information passed to the RAF.

1951 06 30

A squadron commander at RAF Waterbeach was killed when his Meteor jet aircraft got into a roll at between 60 and 70 feet and dived into the ground. It was 2-300 yards from the end of the runway and completely disintegrated, having exploded after the crash. The coroner remarked the accident was the unfortunate result of one of the risks which airmen took in the course of their duty.

1951 09 11

Mr Joseph Henry Priest of Waterbeach, who died suddenly aged 73, was well-known in sporting circles. Fifty years ago he was an amateur champion cyclist and for over 40 years he has been closely identified with the Cam Sailing Club. Setting up for himself as a stationer and printseller in Bridge Street, Cambridge, he continued until the First World War when he opened up the premises as a ladies' outfitter in conjunction with Mr C.N. Mitcham. Later he took the corner premises now occupied by Messrs Peak in Fitzroy Street and carried on as 'The Quality Shop' and subsequently joined the firm of C.N. Mitcham's of Chesterton. In the heyday of amateur theatricals he was a member of the Bijou Amateurs.

1951 09 17

The pilot of a Meteor jet fighter was killed before 3,000 to 4,000 horrified spectators following a mid-air collision with another Meteor at the Battle of Britain "open day" display at R.A.F. Station, Waterbeach. His mother was among those who saw the accident. One Meteor crashed within 200 yards of the crowd, burst into flames and exploded. The other fell on the edge of the airfield near the Cambridge-Ely road. It too burnt and exploded. The display was abandoned and the station commander said over the loudspeaker: "In view of the tragedy you have just witnessed there will be no more flying to-day. You are asked to go home as quickly as possible".

1951 12 07

Waterbeach R.A.F. station is the scene of a "scramble" by Meteors which is shown in the "short" film called "Wing to Wing" at the Regal Cinema. The rapid take-off – a Waterbeach speciality – makes an impressive shot. The film gives a vivid impression of present and future aircraft of the R.A.F. Its "stars" are the Canberra and Valiant jet bombers, together with the Swift jet fighter.

1952 02 09

Long before the arrival of the ten-coach funeral train bearing the body of King George VI, large crowds had gathered at the main vantage points along the line at Ely to pay their homage. At the station crossing hundreds of people assembled on both sides, whilst lines of traffic extended for some distance. Heads were bared as the train rolled smoothly through the station. Workmen who had given up part of their dinner hour and American servicemen were amongst the crowds. At the little village station of Waterbeach about 100 housewives, farmworkers and children gathered. A crowd of more than 800 people lined the marshalling yards on either side of Mill Road Bridge, Cambridge. The long black funeral coach, with all its windows blacked out passed exactly on time. Queen Elizabeth II gazed pensively out of a carriage window as the train passed a group of railwaymen standing caps off near Hills Road Bridge.

1952 06 11

Cambridge Model Aircraft Club held their first "Jetex" flying competition at R.A.F. Waterbeach airfield. The first competing aircraft was towed in, stored snugly in a neat box bicycle trailer and soon other men were rummaging happily as children in a toy cupboard over the side-cars of their motor cycles or car boots. The jets have been in the development stage for nearly five years but sometimes the jet unit would become detached, hissing across the concrete or burn itself out in the long grass. D. Lipscombe, whose plane stayed up for one and a half minutes carried off the Challenge Cup

1952 10 23

Three farm labourers beet singling in a field at Westley Waterless had a lucky escape when they decided to break off for lunch two minutes before a Meteor jet fighter crashed into the field. Due to the heavy rain they decided to go home for lunch. The engines landed on the spot where the men had just finished working. Two of the men had reached the road but Mr V. Clements had stayed an extra

minute or two in order to complete a row and was 50 yards from the crash. The pilot of the plane, on a flight from RAF Waterbeach, was killed.

1953 02 03

More evacuees from the Married Quarters at Felixstowe RAF Station arrived at Waterbeach RAF station, bringing the total to about 150. The matron of the Glanely Rest, at Exning, says that 35 flooded-out residents of the Bristol House Home at Felixstowe had been accommodated at the late Lord Glanely's house. Pye's factory at Oulton Broads, Lowestoft, was flooded by 28-ft waves and put out of action. Salt water covered much of the equipment. Yesterday Mr L.W. Jones, Works Director and Mr C.A. Harmer, Technical Director went to Lowestoft to survey the damage and make plans for sending help from Cambridge

1953 04 20

The Minister of Education opened a new primary school at Waterbeach. From the stage of the comfortable and colourful school hall the Minister spoke of the need for new schools and told members of the County Education Committee: "When you go on building schools in this authority, please try to build them more quickly". She asked them to combine "push, driver and quickness" to the task of building them in time.

1953 08 26

Waterbeach RAF station which had a distinguished record as a Bomber Command base during the war and is now in the forefront of Britain's fighter defence system, was presented with its station badge. It depicts part of the station's history with a motif of a rose and a sprig of gilliflower which were at one time the rent paid for Waterbeach Manor and Abbey, which forms a large part of the airfield. The station was formed in 1941 for bombers; in 1945 it was taken over by Transport Command and in 1950 became part of Fighter Command

1953 09 14

For the first time in the history of the National Federation of Anglers' All-England championship the individual title has come to Cambridgeshire. The proud winner is Neville Hazelwood, an R.A.F. Sergeant at Waterbeach, who was in the Cambridge Albion Society team. Fishing in the Nene he landed 27lbs 14 ozs of bream, the best of which was about 3 lbs.

1953 12 16

Four meteor jet fighters crashed in the Duxford area; three pilots parachuted to safety and one was pulled from his wrecked plane by farm workers. They were on a training flight from Waterbeach airfield and were not in collision in the air before crashing. It is possible the pilots abandoned their machines after running short of fuel. It is the second time that a plane has crashed at White House Farm, West Wickham; a Meteor came down at the back of the farm just before harvest.

1954 05 14

The pilot of an R.A.F. Swift jet aircraft from Waterbeach airfield was killed when it crashed within 200 yards of a group of houses in Stretham fen. Had the blast from the aircraft, which exploded, gone in the direction of the houses then wreckage would most certainly have struck them. As it was pieces of the aircraft were strewn in a half circle for about 200 yards. Eye-witness Mr Leslie Pinion said: "the plane dived straight down in the field and exploded". It left a crater about 15 feet deep. Waterbeach was the first unit to be equipped with Swift jet fighters and the lightning-fast silver machines with their distinctive swept-back wings have become a familiar sight.

1954 09 20

A perfect black smoke ring topped by a mushroom cloud hung in the air over a bombed fort hit by Meteors highlighted Waterbeach 'Battle of Britain' Saturday. Small boys clutching identification manuals pestered their less knowledgeable fathers with technical questions or casually recognised jet planes and provided exact data for ignorant mothers. They elbowed their ways into the cockpits of fighters on display – except the Swift, which was closely guarded. A mass scramble split the eardrums

as the jets roared down the runway in pairs but most impressive was the tight formation flying of the modern fighters at low level. Stateliest aircraft were the long-range submarine killer Shackletons while 'Old Faithful', the Vampire V flew some skilful aerobatics.

1955 09 30

When a Hawker Hunter jet fighter crash-landed near Upware pumping station the pilot was pulled from the aircraft and taken to the Ely RAF Hospital by a helicopter which had taken off from Waterbeach airfield carrying the Station Commander, Gp Capt Chackfield, to the scene of the crash. Units from Cambs and Fordham fire brigades were called but the aircraft did not catch fire. 55 09 30a

1955 10 11

A Waterbeach smallholder & member of the British Soil Association is convinced that the increase in cancer is due to synthetic chemicals used in soaps and detergents and the use of artificial fertilisers on the land. He deplores the burning of waste straw which makes good a compost producing healthier and better flavoured vegetables and throughout the long dry summer his crops have continued to thrive. 55 10 11

1956 03 19

The 'Slap Up' corner at Waterbeach is not as dangerous as many road users think: in the last four years there have been only six accidents and improvements are not high on the priority list. If a roundabout were built motorists would not like it, as it would mean their having to slow down. The large aerodrome had increased traffic but the road from Milton was in process of being widened and it is possible that a lay-by for lorries would be built. 56 03 19b

1956 03 29

Waterbeach airfield to receive standard, history 56 squadron. 56 03 29

1956 04 14

One of the old properties just demolished in Park Street, Cambridge – no.60 – has a famous connection. Back in 1853 a young schoolmaster called Charles Haddon Spurgeon who lived there put an advertisement in the paper saying he intended to take six young gentlemen as day pupils. Teaching would include arithmetic, geometry and mensuration, scripture, Latin and Greek at a cost of £5 per annum. He became an eloquent preacher and, after doing great work in Waterbeach, was called to London where he addressed a gathering of 23,000 people at the Crystal Palace. 56 04 14c

1956 04 28

The Duchess of Kent visited RAF Waterbeach to present it with its Standard, the greatest honour to be bestowed on 56 Fighter Squadron in its lengthy history. It is awarded only to squadrons of 25 years' standing or with a history of special outstanding operations. Afterwards she had difficulty signing the visitors' book because of cold fingers; the signature looks a little indistinct and shaky 56 04 28a

1956 09 17

Thousands of visitors to the Battle of Britain airshow at RAF Waterbeach saw Peter Twiss demonstrate the Fairey F.D.2 high speed research aircraft in which he set up the world air speed record of 1,132 mph. Individual aerobatics displays came from Vampire, Meteor, Hunter, Provost and Chipmunk aircraft and members of the Cambridgeshire Regiment, T.A., demonstrated parachuting from a balloon. 56 09 17 & a

1958 03 17

A Hawker Hunter jet aircraft from RAF Waterbeach crashed into a ploughed field at Hinton Hall, Haddenham. It was seen to dive 'straight into the ground' and an explosion followed the impact. The pilot baled out and landed at the back of some Council houses at Wilburton, 800 yards away. 58 03 17

1958 05 30

Landbeach Sand and Gravel Company appealed for a new pit near the junction of Waterbeach and Ely Roads. Mr Arthur Dickerson said it had lain derelict for 25 years, it grew nothing but rubbish and scrub and was infested with rabbits and vermin. If it were used for gravel workings the resulting pits could be left open for the tipping of refuse, the topsoil put back and the land eventually made available for agriculture. But neighbours said it was a peaceful area and their property would be devalued. 58 05 30 & b

1958 08 19

RAF Waterbeach has the rare distinction of holding two squadron standards. They are hard-won honours: not only must the units have outstanding records but they must have 25 years operational service. One is No.25, the oldest-established night fighter squadron in the world, formed at Melrose in 1915, and the first to be jet-equipped in 1954. The other is no.56 which destroyed more than 150 enemy aircraft during the last war. 58 08 19 & 19a

1958 10 06

RAF Waterbeach's dining hall has been judged the best in the UK. It gives the impression of a first-class cafeteria with crème garbure, sliced pressed beef, braised rabbit jardinaire with buttered cabbage and sherry trifle with cream on the menu. There is no queuing and the airmen can sit at tables amid pleasant greenery and decorative iron work. The luxury does not end there; in the entrance hall airmen may smoke, drink coffee and read papers. 58 10 06 & a

1958 10 21

Landbeach Sand and Gravel Company has lost its appeal to open a new gravel pit at Waterbeach Road, Landbeach. It was undesirable to open a wet pit so close to houses and the existing wilderness of trees and bushes would be lost forever. There might also be difficulty in getting enough suitable material to fill it; the use of domestic refuse would be unpleasant for householders, an Inspector decided. 58 10 21

1959 02 04

The remote Methodist Chapel in Swaffham Prior fen was built in July 1884. It has a pleasant interior with room for a congregation of about 70. Heating is by a small stove and it still retains the shiny brass paraffin lamps which have provided lighting since the chapel was built. But it is weather-worn and the average attendance is half-a-dozen worshippers. There used to be a small chain boat which enabled people to attend from the Waterbeach side of the river; this has since disappeared. It was nearly sold in 1953 but people in Stretham organised services and the chapel remained open. Now two families are opposing its sale. 59 02 04a

1959 10 30

The 'Miss Cambridge 1959' contest promoted by Billy Pearce attracted ten entrants. Winner was Pauline Badcock from Cottenham, who is a punch card operator; second was Norma Bullen of Waterbeach, a bank clerk and third Frances May of Cambridge, an insurance company clerk. All three will go into the final to select 'Miss Cambridgeshire 1959' at Linton Village College. 59 04 22c
Waterbeach RAF best airmen's mess – 59 10 30

1959 11 07

RAF Waterbeach trophy win – 59 11 07b

The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed cuttings files from this date

1960 08 20

Two Cambridgeshire rivers are so heavily polluted that the County Medical Officer has posted notices warning of the dangers to bathers. The River Lark at Isleham receives the outfall of the Bury St Edmunds sewage disposal works at Lackford. But samples taken at Waterbeach, Fen Ditton and Grantchester show the pollution in the Cam is even worse 60 08 20

1960 09 09

RAF Waterbeach visited by Austrian minister of defence – 60 09 09g

1960 12 07

Fenland formerly produced fine geese which were driven to London, resting at Goose Hall near Waterbeach. An old lady remembers seeing them set off from the farm, being first driven through wet tar and then fine grit which resulted in a kind of shoe that enabled the geese to walk many miles in comparative comfort. Turkeys walked too but were equipped with a kind of leather boot which lasted all the way to London. Although turkeys moved faster they insisted on taking a good rest for the night while geese plotted steadily along all the time, snatching food as they went and just resting for short periods. 60 12 07a

1961 03 06

Duxford airfield, the home of RAF fighter planes since the First World War, is to close as a Fighter Command base and will probably be administered from Waterbeach. It has a tremendous history but was built for bi-plane use and since it cannot be expanded any further it must be sacrificed in an age of supersonic aircraft. The 130 married quarters will continue to be used and the buildings and hangars become storage and support units. It will remain as a front line fighter base through 1961 until the closure is completed 61 03 06a

1961 07 15

The approach to the ferry at Upware was a public right-of-way. Barges loaded and unloaded at the spot and people went there to get water. For many years children from Waterbeach Fen used the ferry to cross the river on their way to school. In 1903 they crossed four times a day for which the ferry owner was paid £6 a year by the County Council. But since the 'No Hurry' has been demolished the track had become overgrown and a new owner had erected a fence, obstructing access. Having seen an old postcard he agreed to remove it, magistrates were told 61 07 15 & a

1961 11 28

Two young fliers from RAF Waterbeach were given lifts by passing motorists when they landed safely by parachute after abandoning their Javelin jet fighter-interceptor aircraft high over Cambridgeshire. The 700 mph aircraft plunged into a field on Rectory Farm at Fox End Balsham and blew up, scattering wreckage over a wide area. Crash investigation work was hampered as live ammunition from the aircraft's canons was lying in the thick mud of the field where it crashed. 61 11 28

1962 06 15

Landbeach School was overcrowded with 49 children divided into an infant and junior class for which there are two teachers. It would be better if it were closed with children going to Waterbeach. But the County did not have the right to shut a Church-controlled school unless there was one nearby, and that at Milton was already full. Parents were opposed: the school had been part of the life of the village for 200 years; once closed it was most unlikely there would ever be another one. 62 06 15a

1963 01 16

The Prowlers, a popular local rock'n'roll group, are recording two numbers for a new teenage magazine programme for the BBC radio 'Come On In'. Last April they played on Anglia television and since then have been successful at a number of local dances. The instrumentalists are Peter R. Garner, David Cooper, Adrian Tomkinson, all from Waterbeach, and Peter Gale from Needingworth. 63 01 16

1963 05 25

A 1916 Sopwith Pup aircraft was forced to make an emergency landing in a field near Waterbeach. Police stopped traffic on the A10 while it was manhandled across the road on to the airfield 63 05 25a

1963 07 09

R.A.F. Waterbeach ceases to be a flying base in August and becomes a constructional depot with flying personnel replaced by teams from West Raynham and Wellesbourne Mountford. About 70 civilian workers will become redundant. Waterbeach is a pre-war airfield and there was considerable controversy when agricultural land was taken over by the R.A.F. for operations 63 07 09

1964 95 12

A wartime Spitfire has made the 250-mile road journey from RAF Middleton St George Yorkshire on a 60-foot transporter to Ely where it was lifted with help from a 10-ton crane from RAF Waterbeach operated by Mr Stanley Porter of Bohemond Street. Now fitters are re-assembling it on the lawn at the entrance to the RAF Hospital where it will be on permanent display and floodlit at night 64 05 12

1964 05 01

Airfield Construction Unit at RAF Waterbeach – feature – 64 05 01dd

1964 05 15

Waterbeach RAF station used by Airfield Construction Unit – 64 05 15c

1964 06 22

Automatic half-barrier railway level crossings to be installed Wisbech Road Manea and Bottisham Rd Waterbeach – 64 06 22

1964 06 23

Prowlers pop group members open antique shop Waterbeach – 64 06 23

1964 07 17

Waterbeach photo feature – 64 07 17a

1964 09 04

Waterbeach & Clayhithe photo feature – 64 09 04a

1964 09 17

Retired Squadron Leader Douglas Thompson Adamson has bought Joist Farm, Waterbeach and is adopting modern methods on a traditional fen farm. He has built a 200-ton grain store in an old Dutch barn with eight Crittal silos equipped with the latest Simplex ‘Airsweep’ floor cleaning. He hopes to mechanise the sugar beet crop though he does not believe that thinners or gappers are altogether satisfactory for fen soil. Most important, like many farmers, he aims to expand. 64 09 17

1964 09 25

Cambridgeshire’s 19 wartime airfields are falling into disuse or being reclaimed as farm land. Weed-choked runways, derelict barracks and tumbledown conning towers are all that is left. At Duxford the concrete baffles have been demolished and its runways are disappearing with the rubble being used for housing and road building. Waterbeach had a succession of Vikings and Vampires aircraft but now it is mainly trainers that take off. At Bottisham many of the buildings are used for storing grain. But Mepal, which recently had a Thor missile base, is now in the hands of the Americans – 64 09 25c

1965 01 08

Waterbeach vicar criticises demolition of RAF buildings – could have been used as living quarters – 65 01 08

1965 02 18

RAF Waterbeach has new Roman Catholic Church – 65 02 18f

1965 03 03

Waterbeach RAF airfield sign warns of low-flying aircraft – 65 03 03a

1966 01 03

Army taking over R.A.F. Waterbeach in July – pic of Spitfire gate guard – 66 01 03

1963 03 22

Waterbeach airfield Spitfire gate guard moved to Kemble – 66 03 22a

1969 07 22

Waterbeach electric pumping station near locks in Ranold Road were installed last February, completed in May – 69 07 22

1972 05 12

Robinson and Gimbert, the Cambridge builders with reputation for high class work have been taken over by one of the "big boys" of British home building. From next week they will be trading under the direction of T & E Homes Ltd of Reigate. The Cambridge firm who started in Guildhall Street 25 years ago and moved to Victoria Road six years ago have 60 full time employees. Robinson and Gimbert currently have schemes on the go at Oakington and Stapleford, and recently completed one at Waterbeach. They build about 50 houses a year

1972 09 08

Just in case The Bomb should ever drop, eight powerful new air raid warning sirens are to be installed in Cambridgeshire. Although few people ever see or hear them, the Home Office has about 22,000 warning points in the United Kingdom equipped with electric or hand sirens for air attack warnings and maroons for fall-out warnings. Now they are to be replaced by powerful compressed-air sirens which are much more efficient and much louder. The eight which are to be installed in Cambridgeshire will be at Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge, Waterbeach Barracks, Oakington airfield, Great Wilbraham, the old Duxford airfield, Bassingbourn Barracks Lt Eversden & Linton

1972 12 06

There was a bit of a flap in Comberton this summer when the village ducks took to the wing and flew away. The village pond had dried up. The ducks came back when the autumn rains began and the pond started to fill up again. This week the Army came to the rescue. The officers and men of the Royal Engineers, based at Waterbeach, decided that a spot of pond digging would be good training for their excavator operators and on Monday the job of lifting several tons of slime and silt began. An army spokesman said "We have a number of families living in the village and we decided it would be neighbourly and help us at the same time"

1973 06 19

Waterbeach may get a £150,000 by-pass instead of just a new minor road into the village - because of Cambridge's traffic problems. If the plans are accepted the by-pass will link the main Cambridge-Ely road near the Slap-Up junction with the Clayhithe Bridge over the River Cam. The mile-long by-pass would replace the short stretch of road originally planned to link the A10 with the centre of Waterbeach. The County Surveyor said that the by-pass was now being recommended because of the large volume of traffic using the Fen Ditton - Waterbeach road as a short-cut to the Eastern side of Cambridge to avoid the congested city streets

1973 07 05

Emergency hospital treatment had to be given to 11 people after a drum of poisonous chemical spilled on to the roadway at one of Cambridge's busiest junctions as the afternoon rush hour started. The chemical spilled when the drum containing ethyl acrylate split open after falling from a lorry at the Huntingdon Road - Histon Road corner. Immediately the air, in spite of a strong breeze was pungent with the smell of the liquid. The police and fire brigade were called to deal with the problem. The drama, which led ultimately to the total ban of traffic at the junction began at 3.10pm, by 6pm the acrylate was safely loaded on to a sand covered trailer, then in convoy with two fire tenders and police cars it was taken at less than 10 mph the seven miles to the Royal Engineer's airfield at Waterbeach

1973 10 03

The trapping know-how of an obliging Royal Engineer is helping Waterbeach Parish Council clear up a plague of rabbits in their burial ground. After a variety of remedies had failed, Sapper Nigel Packer, from the neighbouring barracks, took a hand and set two of his own ferrets on the job. And already the ferrets have paid their way in fighting the nuisance caused by the rabbits chewing up graveside flowers and burrowing beneath the gravestones and surrounds. Sapper Packer's expertise is a welcome relief to villagers, who have enjoyed a long history of community service by the Royal Engineers

1973 10 15

An appeal for special heavy-duty breakdown equipment went out after an articulated lorry overturned at Mitcham's Corner, Cambridge - and the wrecked vehicle and its scattered load were still there six hours later. The lorry overturned outside Wallis' garage showroom at 6.40 am. But the major equipment of local garages was already committed to other things and later the army sent some from Waterbeach. The accident caused extensive delays - at one time there was a queue right back to Washpit Lane, Girton, more than a mile from the city boundary on Huntingdon Road

1974 08 03

First into the new swimming pool built by the men at Waterbeach barracks was the officer commanding 63 Headquarters Squadron, Major J.M. Allen. He was thrown in by his men at the official opening ceremony. A squad of 17 men built the 30-metre pool from scratch. It cost about £10,000 and is Waterbeach's first major amenity purpose built for the 1,000 men. Next September a Government-built gymnasium should be completed

1974 09 02

Rain delayed and upset the programme of events at the Burma Star Day at Waterbeach barracks. The air and ground display spectacular, which attracted thousands of people, was threatened by a heavy downpour. The show is recognised as one of the largest of its kind in Britain and is probably the only one combining service and civilian, air and ground activities

1974 10 17

The A10 crossroads at Waterbeach, an accident blackspot which over the past year has been the scene of two death crashes, is to be altered before the end of the year. Milton's High Street is also acknowledged to be a stretch of road where accidents frequently happen. The head of the police traffic division said "I don't see there is anything basically wrong with the part of the road which passes through Milton provided people are sticking to the enforceable speed limit." During the year within Milton's built up area seven road accidents involving personal injury were reported.

1975 02 20

Four men ran a pirate commercial radio station from remote spots in the Cambridgeshire countryside, magistrates were told. They were caught in a field near Histon as they had just closed down a two-hour broadcasting session of Anglia Free Commercial Radio. They had previously put out two-hour broadcasts on Sundays from various spots in Cambridgeshire, and the programmes were heard in places as widespread as Exning, Waterbeach and Fenstanton. The magistrates ordered the transmitter to be forfeited. The men were fined between £50 and £70 each

1975 03 21

Cambridge has become a garrison town, with more soldiers living within a 10-mile radius of the city than University dons. With the arrival of a new infantry regiment at Oakington there are now 2,500 soldiers in the area with 2,000 dependants. Most of the troops are stationed at Bassingbourn with the army engineers at the former battle of Britain RAF station at Waterbeach. There is no larger concentration of troops than this in East Anglia, other than at Colchester.

1975 10 10

Complaints have been made about the growing number of large container type vehicles using Waterbeach and Horningsea as a means of bypassing congested Cambridge streets. But the county

surveyor pointed out that the building of the Northern By-pass would do away with the problems now being caused in the narrow winding village streets.

1976 04 01

Farmers in the Waterbeach Fen and Swaffham areas were assessing the damage after what one of them describes as the worst fen blow he could remember in 25 years farming there. Huge black clouds hovered over the fens nearly all day as high winds whipped up the light soil and blocked many drainage channels in the area. The blow does not appear to have involved any other light peat land south of Littleport.

1976 04 30

The River Cam is so polluted at Waterbeach that people who fall in it suffer from skin trouble and are sick if they swallow any of the water, claimed Coun Hilda Hatley. She said that a special anti-algae paint had been stripped off the bottom of a boat by the water. Councillors agreed the problem was the severely over-loaded Cambridge sewage works.

1976 08 06

Admiral of the Fleet, Earl Mountbatten of Burma, dropped in at the Burma Star Day at Waterbeach Barracks. His aim was to see for himself how, in just five years, "a bunch of amateurs" had managed to turn a small military tattoo into one of the biggest displays of its kind in the country. Flying displays were put on by numerous veteran and modern aircraft, ranging from the Spitfire to the USAF's new F5E Tiger II fighters, based at Alconbury. A record 50,000 people attended the show and more than £6,000 profit was made for six charities catering for ex-servicemen

1976

Members of South Cambs Planning Committee spent more than an hour debating how they could make their meetings shorter. There have been so many applications for development that meetings have been going on from 10am to 2pm. Matters came to a head at the last meeting which went on for 6½ hours. "Meetings could be curtailed if members weren't so verbose", said Coun Hilda Hatley of Waterbeach. But the chairman, Coun Joe Brown, said he had no power to stop a full discussion not would he want to stifle debate. It was agreed to stop councillors repeating themselves.

1977 02 10

Planners took a long hard look around Cambridge to see where development could best be accommodated. They soon dismissed Histon or Girton because they have relatively limited potential for longer-term growth. At Milton there is considerable opportunity for expansion within the new road framework. Both Bar Hill and Waterbeach possess characteristics suitable for growth, but Cottenham is less accessible to Cambridge. Growth of up to 4,000 might be contemplated in the Teversham-Fulbourn area and the same at Bottisham. To the south it would be possible to develop the Clay Farm area of Trumpington and the Shelfords but Sawston seems to have the greatest development potential

1977 03 02

Mr Dick Dunford of Waterbeach is a firm believer in hoof-power and would prefer to have his horse, Fred, than a smart car any day. He comes into Cambridge on a shopping trip, riding along the A10 from Milton. When they arrive Fred will happily stay put at any convenient car park, meter or cycle rack. Mr Dunford pays the going rate at meters and has never got a parking ticket: "The traffic wardens like him", he said.

1977 03 23

Residents of Kingsmead Park Waterbeach complain they are jolted out of bed to the thud of heavy machine-gun fire and the ear-splitting crack of high-powered SLR rifles and the birds have emigrated. The Army rifle range is right outside their bedroom windows & they are fed up with the day and night war games fifty yards from their caravans. The Army say that owing to the Northern Ireland situation all soldiers are required to fire a personal weapons test and that moving the range would be too expensive – it was there before the caravan park

1977 07 11

Young Thomas was a school dunce, an exam failure, a no-hoper. At best he was seen as unfortunate and underprivileged – at worst he was a stupid and lazy idiot. But this year, while many of his ambitious school contemporaries are kicking their heels in the dole queue, Thomas is enjoying his first job after being groomed for employment by the Work Experience Unit at Waterbeach. He got free travel & free overalls while learning to do simple tasks well, straight-forward repetitive jobs requiring concentration and co-ordination. Now he is one of the unit's 23 pupils to leave and find full-time work since Christmas, only seven are left out of work, compared to one-third of Cambridgeshire's school leavers who are doing nothing because of the national malaise of chronic unemployment.

1977 07 19

Some of the plans for the development of Cambridge, which upset people living in the necklace villages, are being scrapped. Cambridgeshire planners are rethinking the city development plans because they claim information on population figures and job opportunities was wrong. Population growth in the area over the next 20 years is likely to be only 13,000 instead of the original estimate of 17,000. Intense opposition mounted by villagers against the rapid build-up of houses and industry near their home has had its effect. The Fen Ditton, Waterbeach and Cottenham expansion is almost certain to be scrapped and in its place more housing in the city itself and in growing villages like Hardwick will be suggested.

1977 09 02

Burma Star Day at Waterbeach airfield has become one of the region's major annual events and it is with a mixture of sadness and relief that the organisers present their last show. After six years they have decided it is time for a rest. There will be the usual parade of events with the sensational display of the RAF Red Arrows, the freefalling RAF parachutists the Falcons and the flypast of the huge triangular Vulcan as the highlights of the day. Massed bands, motor cycle displays and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will be on show.

1977 09 05

The last Burma Star Day at Waterbeach went out with a bang – with record profits of more than £7,000 and a record attendance of over 53,000. It will be the last air show and display; the organiser and controller, Mr W.H.P. Clarke said "The show depends on many local volunteers who do this at weekends and in their spare time". The prime attraction must have been the RAF's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight but there was also the sole remaining airworthy RAF Mosquito. They were joined by aircraft of today including a Buccaneer, Phantom and a pair of Harrier jump jets.

1977 10 19

Structure plan ideas for channelling Cambridge expansion population into the "pleasant little villages" of Milton and Waterbeach over the next 15 years have been described as "completely abhorrent" by Coun Paddy Crossman. He doubted that the population increase during the next 20 years would be anywhere near as high as the 12,800 predicted by the planners. Among the proposals is one to permit Milton (pop 1,400) to expand to 6,000 and to allow for industrial development in the village to provide jobs. Waterbeach is earmarked for some development, though on a much smaller scale.

1978 04 03

Horace Bull, Britain's oldest angler – who went sea fishing after his 100th birthday – celebrated 101 years with a drink and a cigar in his favourite pub, The Royal Oak at Stretham Bridge. The former Waterbeach butcher who started angling more than 90 years ago hopes to have another sea fishing trip this year – if he can find a fellow angler who won't be sea-sick. For a man who remembers the A10 when it was just a cart track and who bought whisky for £1 a gallon, Horace is still fit and active

1978 12 01

Parts of the Newmarket-based Kerridge building group have been sold to Iranian businessmen, who have paid cash for three companies within the group. The deal includes Platonoff and Harris a shopfitting company based in Sturton Street and the former Jack Branch (Waterbeach) site. The jobs of the 600 employees of the principal part of the business, Kerridge Construction Ltd will be safe and the company has lots of work. The firm was set up in Cambridge in 1875 and moved its headquarters to Newmarket in the summer.

1979 12 11

The landlord of the Star in Station Road Waterbeach did not want to put 'just another beer garden' behind his pub so he has installed a mini-menagerie. Already there are a range of pheasants, a couple of guinea fowl, two goats with a taste for beer, a dozen rabbits and a collection of fan-tail doves. Dave Halsey hopes to install a duck pond and a stable for a 17-hand white Percheron horse. He has also become a hoarder of agricultural by-gones and the pub is fitted out with various tack. People are always bringing him extra things to display on his walls.

1980 10 21

Until recently the Star pub in Waterbeach was famous for its menagerie. Now the landlord has become caretaker at the village school and has taken some of his animals with him. A miniature compound has been built to cater for his Shetland pony, two goats, rabbits and a number of exotic birds. But he has yet to find room for a heavy horse and cart. The children are delighted, many haven't seen a goat close up before. 80 10 21

1980 12 01

Soham Comrades' Band is the new brass band champion of Cambridge, snatching the title from Littleport. Chatteris Town Band came third. Each had to play a march, a hymn and one other work. In the contest for small bands Waterbeach took the first prize, Wicken was second, followed by Cottenham, Haddenham and Burwell. Cottenham took the Cook trophy for the highest marks in the march with the Ernie Avery memorial trophy for the highest marks in the hymn going to Waterbeach. 80 12 01

1980 12 04

Some of the best-looking Christmas crackers are produced at the Waterbeach Work Experience Unit. Crackers have become an established part of the training given to 'non-academic' young people in their last year at school who may have special difficulties in finding a job and adapting to work. More than 1,500 boxes a year are produced. 80 12 04a

1981 12 14

Motorists faced a nightmare journey to work with several main roads blocked by heavy snow. Saffron Walden was snowed in & Royston and Haverhill were cut off as was Cottenham, Waterbeach, Fulbourn and Sutton. Cambridge police rescued 130 people trapped in their cars and about half the county schools were closed as teachers could not get to work. 81 12 14

1984 01 13

Thousands of homes were without electricity when overnight storms brought down power lines all over Cambridgeshire. Eighteen villagers were hit by power cuts and two – Shepreth and Coton – were cut off completely. On the roads cyclists were blown over, cars and lorries swept on to verges and on the A10 at Waterbeach one lorry was blown on to its side. Hundreds of commuters were late for work when felled trees blocked roads. A house at Chapman Way, Over, was wrecked when a 60 foot ash tree crashed through the roof. 84 01 13 p1

1984 01 16

The USAF base at Alconbury is to become a Cruise missile assembly site. The missiles will be flown to Alconbury for assembly and transferred to four permanent bunkers at Molesworth. RAF Waterbeach, RAF Feltwell and RAF Upwood are to house 500-bed nuclear war hospital centres. They

will renovate existing buildings then mothball them until needed for military casualties of war in Europe. 84 01 16 p1

1984 06 23

The image of brass bands has changed: no longer do they consist of a couple of dozen old gentlemen and two lads blowing away at favourite marches for an hour on Sunday mornings. Now they are for younger people. Epitomising this trend is Waterbeach Brass Band; of their 33 players more than half are under 35 and most of their soloists are youngsters. It was formed six years ago when members of the Few and Neville families who played with the Haddenham band decided to form their own. Now the bandmaster is John Few, his wife is a percussionist and his four children also play. 84 06 23 p9

1985 01 17

Jack Harding was well-known as a local entertainer. A keen amateur comedian he was twice-winner of the Cambridge Senior Citizen competition when he brought the house down with his jokes and old songs. Jack was a hardware salesman working from home who took over his father's business. He was well-known in Waterbeach for his cheery personality and for his kindness in visiting the sick and people in need of help. He was also a lay reader at the village church for over 40 years. 85 01 17

1985 05 22

Autogyro pioneer Ken Wallis has just notched up his 16th world record. Flying from Waterbeach, Ken completed his remarkable record-breaking flight to mark the 75th anniversary of the first public viewing of a monoplane built in Cambridge by his father and uncle. "It seemed that the anniversary should be marked in some way, so I made an attempt upon the one world record not held by my autogyro aircraft", he said. 85 05 22a & b

1985 11 12

Waterbeach primary school is displaying a dolls house which was built 50 years ago as a school project in which every pupil took part. The girls wove the carpets and curtains while the boys made the furniture and produced wallpaper out of potato prints. Billy Sabberton remembers it was his job to fit the chimney pot. But he made the hole in the roof too big and was relieved to be given the job of fitting some tiles so he could cover up the gap without the teacher, Miss Hilda Hatley, spotting the mistake. 85 11 12a

1986 05 22

A new town for up to 18,000 people may be created as a cure for Cambridge's spiralling housing needs. It would include shops, pubs, leisure facilities and 150 acres of supporting industry. Two possible sites are the A10 Waterbeach-Landbeach area and the Caxton, Bourn and Swavesey area between the A45 and A604. One solution would be if the Ministry of Defence could be persuaded to leave either Waterbeach or Oakington bases. But County planners have rejected any new settlement south of Cambridge, fearing housing would be snapped up by M11 and railway commuters. 86 05 22

1986 06 26

Plans for a small town at Chittering near Waterbeach may be scrapped and moved into the fens – 86 06 26

1986 08 27

British Rail may build new stations near Cambridge and Huntingdon as part of a modernisation scheme. A county transportation spokesman called for stations at Milton and at new villages near Waterbeach and Swavesey which are under consideration in the Structure Plan review. He'd also like to see the St Ives to Cambridge line re-opened and a stop at Milton would help to service the Science Park as well. This was endorsed by the Railway Development Society who also suggested stations at North Arbury and Cherry Hinton. 86 08 27

1986 11 01

Waterbeach residents have given a resounding thumbs-down to plans for a new town near their village. The chairman of the Parish Council, Bill Saberton, said they had already taken more than their share of growth over the last six years, with an extra 1,500 people, and a further 250 houses were planned. Any more would destroy its life completely. The new town would cause traffic problems, opening a railway line would attract commuters and the land is low-lying and unsuitable for development 86 11 01a

1986 12 11

David Reed Homes have gained a reputation for exclusive developments. Five-bedroom residences at their flagship house building scheme at Friends Walk Saffron Walden have sold for £160,000. They have constructed developments at Sawston, Park Lane Histon, Waterbeach and Grange Road Cambridge 86 12 11a

1987 03 19

European Scouts, distinguished on parade by a traditional uniform of wide-brimmed hats and shorts, are making their mark in the Cambridge area. Locally they were born amid controversy three years ago when a Girton group, then belonging to the mainstream Scout Association, switched to the Federation of European Scouting. Together with groups in Waterbeach and Chesterton, bringing numbers to 140, the now account for 10% of European Scouts in England. They stick closer to the original Baden Powell principles – concentration on skills that can't be classroom learned. 87 03 19

1987 06 12

Clive Sinclair opens new factory at Waterbeach for engineering company Win-Born Products. – 87 06 12f

1987 10 06

An amazing plan to relocate Marshall's Airport to Waterbeach airfield and use the hundreds of acres vacant for a massive housing estate will be put to county councillors. It would solve the city's shortage of land for housing and end aircraft noise problems for residents. The move would create more jobs and relieve traffic. There would then be no need to spend millions of pounds on a proposed new overspill village in the fens. But the airport authorities do not agree. 87 10 06

1988 03 15

The National Trust's Wicken Fen reserve wanted a new pool for wildfowl but the peat kept turning to mud when dug. So soldiers from 39 Engineer Regiment at Waterbeach set off three controlled explosions as a training exercise. When they had finished a TV crew asked them to do just one more, for the cameras. They obliged, so the Trust ended up with a hole much deeper than expected. The pool, about 20 metres square, will be home for moorhen, coot, fen dragonflies and freshwater plants. A hide adapted for wheelchairs will overlook it. 88 03 15

1988 05 16

George Nice opened a garage overlooking the Green at Waterbeach in 1933 to sell bicycles, motorbikes and, later, second-hand cars. When his son Doug Nice took over in 1947 customers could pick up a good quality second-hand Rover 10 for £750 or a small used car for as little as £75. They have been selling Mitsubishi cars for 11 years and have survived a 'rationalisation' of dealers in the face of import restrictions on Japanese vehicles. 88 05 16b

1988 09 09

A 'park-and-float' scheme is being considered to beat traffic chaos in Cambridge. Commuters would park beside the river at Fen Ditton, Horningsea, Waterbeach or Clayhithe and take a river bus into the city, having breakfast en route and reading the morning newspapers. Meanwhile the Cam Conservators may appoint its own trouble-shooter patrolling from Byron's Pool to Bottisham Lock in a specially-adapted electric craft. He would crack down on unregistered punts and also clear rubbish and broken branches in a new drive against pollution. 88 09 09a

1989 02 25

Developers have defended controversial plans to build two new villages. One, named Denny would be near Waterbeach would be called Denny. This would include 1,500 homes ranging from five-bedroom detached properties to starter homes with a village hall, community college, surgery and 27-acre sports field. The other, Highfields, would be five miles west of Cambridge and boast a business park, swimming pool and nine-hole golf course as well as 3,000 houses. Part of the A45 would be turned into a dual carriageway 89 02 15a

1989 05 11

The sale of 1,000 acres of farming land in Stretham and Waterbeach mark the break-up of part of the estate built up by the outstanding agriculturalist, Sir Frederick Hiam. One of the country's biggest growers of vegetables, he was appointed Director of Vegetable Supplies during the First World War and was knighted in 1924. The Stretham land which he bought in 1926 was part of an estate of about 13,000 acres and is now being sold by the family firm following the death of his only child. 89 05 11c

1989 11 21

Co-op chiefs have been forced to sell off the freehold of their Burleigh Street store to fend off a cash crisis. The Victorian building has been sold to a London Investment Company and they will lease back the premises. The Co-op began trading in Burleigh Street in 1908 but has been hit by soaring interest rates on loans taken out to cover major projects such as the massive Beehive Centre. It has already put branches up for sale in Mill Road, Milton Road, Waterbeach, Duxford & Cherry Hinton. 89 11 21

1989 12 01

Councillors approved Cambridgeshire's first ever 'legal' warehouse party in an empty warehouse on a Waterbeach industrial estate, scene of two previous illicit parties. They imposed a ban on alcohol and drugs and the limited numbers to no more than 300. The owner of an adjacent factory used contractors to build an earth wall around his site and other companies blocked entrances. But few attended and the party finished three hours early. Rumours of a heavy police presence kept youngsters away 89 12 01b & 02